

George MacDonald
Stories for Little Folks
THE PRINCESS AND
THE GOBLIN

SIMPLIFIED BY
ELIZABETH LEWIS



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**THE PRINCESS AND THE
GOBLIN**

THIRD EDITION

George Macdonald Stories For Little Folks

THE PRINCESS AND THE GOBLIN

SIMPLIFIED BY
ELIZABETH LEWIS

WITH SIX FULL PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOR BY
MARIA L. KIRK



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THE PRINCESS AND THE GOBLIN



THE PRINCESS FINDS HER FAIRY GRAND-MOTHER.

THERE was once a little princess called Irene. Her father was king over a country made up mainly of mountains, on one of which stood his palace. Irene was born in this beautiful place. But she was not a strong child, and so was sent away at once to be brought up in a big country house far from the palace.

There were plenty of people to care for her, and about everything was done to make her happy. She had toys without number, beautiful clothes, and good food. There was one thing, however, she did not have. She did not have any one to play with—any other child, I mean. Of course, there was her nurse, Lootie, but she was grown up. Grown-up people seem to forget how to play. They seem to forget entirely how to “make believe.”

Lootie seemed to think that if she got out some of the wonderful toys the princess had, that was all she needed to do. But that is not playing, now is it? Irene wanted some one to help her “make believe,” and to make dolls and animals walk about and say things. Lootie was no good at that at all.

It was not so bad when the weather was fine. Then Irene could go out of doors and run about in the sunshine and air. But when it rained, as it often did, the little princess *did* get so lonesome and so tired of being by herself!

One day, the mountain was all covered with mist. Irene stood at the window and saw the raindrops come down faster, and faster, and faster. The water poured off the edge of the roof like a gray curtain. There was no going out that day, and by afternoon the princess was so tired that she hated the sight of her toys.

She was cross, too, and her nurse did not know what to do next. But she got out a new set of toys and put them on the table in front of Irene. The princess did not move and Lootie thought she was going to sleep. So she stole out of the room like a mouse and shut the door behind her.

But Irene was not going to sleep. She was just

leaning back in her chair, her hands in her lap, very miserable. When she heard the door shut behind Lootie, she started up. She thought she would run away somewhere too.

Anything for a change! She did not even look where she was going, but pulled open a door at the foot of an old oak stair-case. She had never been up those stairs and it flashed upon her now that *that* would be something to do. She would go up that stair-case and see what was there.

So up she ran, up and up, two flights at least before she stopped. She was afraid Lootie would come and call her back. At the top of the second flight, she turned into a long passage and ran along it. There were doors on each side of her, but she did not stop to open any. She ran on to another passage and turned down that.

Here were more doors. Then she came to another passage with only doors on each side of her. Now she began to be a bit frightened. It was all so silent! All those doors must hide rooms with no one in them! That was dreadful to think of and she started at once to go back. Back she ran through passage after passage, past doors and doors and doors! No stair-case did she see!

Her little heart began to beat as fast as her little feet ran. A lump of tears was growing in her throat. Oh, if she could only find the stair-case and get back to her nursery! She would never, never, never leave it again! But there was nothing but passages and doors everywhere! Then she burst out crying and threw herself down on the floor.

She did not cry very long, however. She was as brave as could be expected of a princess of her age. Pretty soon, she got up and wiped her eyes and brushed the dust off her gown. "Now," she said to herself, "I will walk down these passages slowly, and look carefully for that stair-case. Of course, it is here somewhere. I did not see it because I was running so fast."

So she set out to walk slowly and look for the stair-case. She went over the same ground again and again. She did not know this, for the doors and passages were all alike. At last, in a corner through a half-open door, she *did* see a stair-case. But alas! it went the wrong way. Instead of going *down*, it went *up*.

"Well," said the little princess, "if I can not find my way down, I may as well go on up." So up she went.

The stair-case was so steep that she had to go up it on her hands and feet. At the top were three doors, one at the right, one at the left, and one straight in front of her.

“ I will open one of these doors,” said the princess. “ But which one shall I open ? ” Now, out of the right hand door came a soft buzzing sound like a happy bee that had got into a beautiful flower. “ I will open this one,” said Princess Irene. So she did. Then what did she see !

The most beautiful old lady in the world sat in the middle of the floor spinning. Her eyes were so wise you knew at once that she must be very old. Her hair was like a curling stream of silver. It fell loosely over her shoulders and down her back. She had on a black velvet gown with rich lace on it. And though she was so old, her face was as beautiful as a girl’s.

Princess Irene stood staring. The beautiful old lady lifted her head and said sweetly, “ Come in, my dear. I am glad to see you.”

Being a princess, little Irene was very polite and did as she was bid. She did not hang back staring, but stepped into the room at once. She shut the door and went straight up to the beautiful lady.

She looked up into her face with her lovely blue eyes in which two stars seemed to have been melted.

“Would you like to know my name?” asked the lady smiling. “My name is Irene.”

“Why, that is *my* name!” cried the princess.

“Yes, I know it is,” answered the lady. “Your papa, the king, asked me to let you have it. So I did.”

“It is a pretty name,” said the princess. “It was very kind of you to let me have it.”

“Not so very kind,” said the lady smiling, “for a name is something you can give away and still keep.”

“So it is!” cried Irene. “I never thought of that! But why did you give it to me? How did you know about me?”

“I am your fairy grandmother,” replied the beautiful lady. “I came to this house when you did—to take care of you.”

“Do you live here always?” asked Irene.

“Yes,” answered the lady.

“Why, who takes care of you?” asked Irene.

“I take care of myself,” said her fairy grandmother.

“But, dear fairy grandmother, what do you eat?”

The beautiful lady stopped her spinning and rose, holding out her hand. "Come with me, dear," she said, "and I will show you."

She led Irene out to the door that was opposite the stair-case by which she came up, and opened it. The first thing Irene saw was the blue sky, and then the roofs of the houses. On the roofs, a flock of lovely white pigeons was walking about and cooing and bowing. Irene clapped her hands in delight and the pigeons all fluttered up into the air.

"You have frightened my poultry," said her fairy grandmother, smiling.

"And they have frightened me," said the princess, smiling too. "But what very nice poultry! Do you eat them, fairy grandmother?"

"No, dear, I eat only their eggs." The lady opened a door in the wall and showed Irene the nests of the pigeons with some little white eggs in them.

"How nice they must be!" said Irene. "But, dear fairy grandmother, my papa is a king. He wears a crown. If you are really my fairy grandmother, you must have a crown too."

"So I have," said her fairy grandmother. "Some other day, I will show it to you. But now,

you must run back to your nursery. Lootie will be dreadfully scared about you."

"So she will," said Irene. "But then, I have lost the stair-case that goes down."

"I must show you the way then," said her fairy grandmother, smiling.

She took Irene's hand in hers and led the way. Somehow, it was as easy to find the way as could be!

"How did I ever lose it!" cried Irene.

She skipped a little way down the stair-case as she spoke. Then she turned to look back at her beautiful fairy grandmother. But she was gone!

* * * * *

"Wherever have you been, princess?" cried Lootie, her nurse, as Irene ran into the nursery. "Don't you know that you are a naughty child to hide away so long? You have scared me badly!"

"I've been away up, up, up, to see my fairy grandmother!" said Irene. "She is the loveliest lady you ever saw! Her face is smooth and white. She has pink cheeks and lovely silver hair that hangs down ever so far. She is spinning, spinning, spinning all the time. She has a beautiful gold crown,

but she did not show it to me. She will, next time, though."

"What are you talking about!" said Lootie. "Why do you tell such a story as that!"

"It is not a story," answered the princess. "It is true, every word of it. She has on a black velvet gown with rich heavy lace on it, and——"

"Princess!" cried the nurse. "You are a very naughty little girl to tell such a story, and then stick to it. What would your papa, the king, say?"

"He would believe me!" cried Irene with tears in her eyes. "I never tell stories. A princess doesn't, ever."

But the nurse was so cross she would not say another word. She would have scolded Irene, only, I dare say, a princess is never scolded very much. But they were both very unhappy for the rest of the day.

Next morning, it was still raining.

"Whatever shall I do today!" said Irene to herself as she stood at the window after breakfast. "Oh, I know! I'll take Lootie up to see my fairy grandmother. Then she'll see!"

She was about to call Lootie when she stopped. "Perhaps a great lady like my fairy grandmother

would not like me to bring any one to see her without telling her," she thought. "No, I don't suppose she would. Oh dear! I didn't think of that! But there! I can go myself, any way. Then I can ask her about Lootie!"

Away she flew to the door and up the stairs she skipped. Down the first passage she ran, down the next one, and down the next. But hunt as she would, there was no stair-case going up or down. She was lost again!

She was frightened as she had been before. And now she got more frightened every minute. Then suddenly she *did* find a stair-case, but it went down instead of up. However, she was glad to find any stair-case, and at once ran down it. The door at the bottom opened—and there she was in the kitchen! How surprised she was! And how surprised the servants were to see her! From there it was easy to find the way, and she was soon back in her nursery.

"But why could I not find my fairy grandmother?" she thought to herself. "Was it really only a dream? Did I go to sleep somewhere and just dream it? Oh, how sorry I am if that is so! How I should like to see her again!"

THE PRINCESS MEETS CURDIE.

Lootie, the nurse, was not only cross because the princess ran away to find her fairy grandmother. She was frightened as well, and for this reason. She knew that there was a strange people living near the house who would be only too glad to catch the little princess and carry her off.

So when she missed Irene for any length of time, she did not know but these people, the goblins, had got her. Irene did not know about the goblins and so was not afraid. But Lootie had been told never to take the princess out after dark nor ever to let her stay out after sun-set.

The goblins were an ugly little people who lived in the caves inside the very mountain on which stood the house where Irene lived. They had once lived on top of the ground. They had not got along well with the king who ruled at that time, and had gone down into the caves to get away from him.

There they had been for a long time, and, because there was no sunlight in the caves of the mountains, they had all become ugly and mis-shapen. In fact, they now thought that the uglier they were,

and the less they looked like the people who lived on top of the ground, the better. They had thin legs, puffy bodies, round hard heads, and twisted faces.

No one would have known very much about them if it had not been for the miners. The miners found out that there were rich ores in that mountain and went to digging for them. In this way, they came across the caves in which the goblins lived. So the goblins were disturbed again and grew to hate the people above ground more than ever. They were always anxious to do them some harm if they could.

They hated the king and his family worst of all. That was why Lootie had been told never to let the princess Irene out of her sight nor ever to let her stay out of doors after sun-set. It was then that the goblins came out of their caves. If they once saw the princess or found out that she lived in that house, they would be sure to do her some harm.

But, as I told you before, little Irene had no play-mates of her own age and was always anxious to get out of doors and run about in the air. So the very first day the sun shone after her adventure with her fairy grandmother, she teased and begged to go out. It was already afternoon when the sun came through the clouds.

“ See! See! Lootie! ” cried Irene, clapping her hands. “ The sun has had his face washed. How bright he is! Do get my hat and let us go out for a walk. Oh dear! Oh dear! How happy I am! ”

Lootie was very glad to go out herself. So off they started. The mountain road was hard and steep and therefore dry, for the water could not stay on it. The bushes were hung with drops of water that shone like jewels in the sun. The little brooks were swollen from the rain and raced along down the mountain side. Irene wanted to stop and look at everything. Every time Lootie said it was time to go back, the princess begged to go on just a little further and a little further.

Suddenly, the shadow of a mountain peak came up from behind and shot in front of them. That meant that the sun was almost down. When she saw it, Lootie snatched Irene’s hand and set off running down the road. She was frightened for fear she would not get home by sun-set. And what if some goblins were about! Irene did not want to run like that and Lootie could not tell her why they must. Irene tried to pull her hand away and said:

“ Lootie! Lootie! Why do you run so fast? Don’t run so! It shakes my teeth when I try to talk! ”

“Then don’t talk!” said Lootie.

“Oh I must!” said Irene. “Look! Look! Don’t you see that funny little man peeping over the rock?”

This only scared Lootie the more and made her run all the faster.

“Look! Look! Lootie!” said Irene again. “There is such a curious creature at the foot of that old tree! Look at it, Lootie! It is making faces at us, I do believe!”

Lootie gave a little cry of fear and ran faster still. Irene could not possibly keep up. Down she fell and skinned both her knees. Lootie picked her up and ran on.

“Who is laughing at me!” said the princess, trying to keep back the sobs and running on as fast as she could.

“No one is laughing!” said the nurse. “Do come on!”

At that moment, there came the sound of tittering near by, and of an ugly voice mocking them. Lootie gave another little scream of terror and hurried on.

“Lootie! Lootie! I *can’t* run any more. Do let us walk a bit.”

“What am I to do!” cried her nurse. “Here, I will carry you!”

She caught Irene up, but found her much too heavy to run with and put her down again. Then she looked wildly about her and gave a great cry.

“We have taken the wrong turning somewhere,” she said. “I don’t know where we are. We are lost! We are lost!”

True enough, they had lost their way. They had been running down into a little valley in which there was no house to be seen. Since she did not know about the goblins, Irene did not know why Lootie was so frightened. But she began to be frightened herself.

Just then, they heard some whistling, and there was a boy coming up the path to meet them. Presently, he began to sing.

“Ring! Dod! Bang!
Go the hammers’ clang!
Hit and turn and bore!
Whizz and puff and roar!
Thus we break the rocks,
Force the goblin locks!
See the shining ore!

One, two, three!
Bright as gold can be!
We're the merry miner boys
Make the goblins hold their noise!"

"I wish you would hold *your* noise!" cried Lootie rudely. She was sure the words and song would bring the goblins about them at once. But whether the boy heard her or not, he did not stop his singing.

"Do be quiet!" cried the nurse in a whispered shriek. But the boy, who was now close at hand, still went on.

"Hush! Scush! Scurry!
There you go in a hurry!
Gobble! Gobble! Goblins."

"There!" said the boy as he came up to them. "That will do for them! They can't bear singing, and they can't stand that song. They can't sing themselves. They have no more voice than a crow. And they don't like other people to sing!"

He was a very nice looking boy about twelve years

old, with dark eyes, happy and merry looking. He was dressed in a miner's dress, with a curious cap on his head.

"I saw them," he went on, "as I came up. I am very glad I did. I knew they were after somebody but I could not see who it was. They won't touch you so long as I am with you."

"Why, who are you?" asked the nurse.

"I am the son of Peter, the miner."

"And why should the goblins mind *you*, pray?"

"Because I don't mind *them*. If you are not afraid of them, they are afraid of you. That's all. But if you sing and miss a word of your song, or say a wrong one—won't they give it to you!"

"Don't go frightening the princess!" scolded Lootie.

"The princess!" repeated the little miner boy, taking off his cap. "I beg your pardon. But you ought not to be out so late! Everybody knows that is against the law. And I hope they did not hear you call her the princess! If they did, they are sure to know her again. They are awfully sharp!"

"Lootie! Lootie!" cried the princess. "Take me home!"

"Don't go on like that!" said the nurse to the

boy almost fiercely. "How could I help it! I lost my way!"

"You should not have been out so late!" said the boy. "But come along, now. I'll soon set you right. Shall I carry your little Highness?"

"No, thank you!" said Irene. "I can walk very well, though I can't run fast. If you give me one hand, and Lootie the other, I shall get along nicely."

They soon had her between them, holding a hand of each.

"Now, let us run!" said Lootie.

"No, no!" said the boy. "If you run, they will be after you in a moment!"

"I don't want to run," said Irene. "I want to talk to you, little boy. But I do not know your name."

"My name is Curdie, little princess."

"What a funny name! Curdie! My name is Irene."

"But you must not call her Irene, you boy," said Lootie. "You must call her Your Royal Highness."

"No, no, he shan't!" cried Irene. "He has been too kind to us! He is going to get us safely home. He shall just call me Irene."

Lootie would have answered angrily, but just

then something in the middle of the way, that looked like a lump of earth, began to move. One after another, it shot out four long things like two arms and two legs. But it was too dark now to tell what they were. Lootie trembled from head to foot.

Curdie began to sing again:

“One, two! Hit and hew!
Three, four! Blast and bore!
Five, six! There’s a fix!
There’s a toad! In the road!
Smash it! Squash it!”

Curdie let go Irene’s hand and rushed at the thing in the road as if he would stamp on it. It gave a great spring and ran straight up one of the rocks like a huge spider.

“Oh, you brave Curdie!” cried the little princess. “I will give you a kiss when we get home!” Lootie was too frightened to say anything. She just caught up Irene’s hand and hurried on.

After this, nothing more happened. They got home safely. No one had missed them, nor even known they had gone out. For this one time, Lootie

was not likely to be scolded or sent away from the palace.

She was hurrying Irene in at the door, but the princess held back. "I promised to give Curdie a kiss!" she said.

"Indeed, you shall not!" cried Lootie. "Princesses do not kiss miner boys. Come in at once!"

"I *promised*," said Irene, with tears in her eyes. "Lootie, I promised! I must!"

"You shall not!" cried Lootie. "Kiss a miner's boy, indeed! Nonsense! Come along!" She was pulling Irene away, who was now crying, when Curdie spoke.

"Never mind, dear little princess! Never mind, now! I will come again! You may be sure that I will come again."

"Oh, thank you, Curdie," said Irene, and stopped crying at once.

"I should like to see him come again!" said Lootie angrily, as Curdie went off.

"You *will* see him!" said Irene. "I know you will! You may be sure Curdie will keep his word! He is sure to come, if he says so!"

"I'd like to see him!" repeated Lootie angrily. Lootie was angry because her conscience troubled

her. She felt how wrong it was to stay out after sun-set though no one else knew of it. And she could not forget that the goblins had heard her call Irene "princess." They knew now who she was and where she lived. From now on, they would be sure to be watching to do her some harm. But Irene only thought how nice it was to have Curdie for a friend. Then she wondered if her fairy grandmother was really a dream—or if she had two friends now, her fairy grandmother and Curdie.

CURDIE FINDS A GOBLIN HOUSE.

In the middle of that same night, Curdie Peterson waked up suddenly. He thought he heard strange noises outside the house. He softly opened the door and there in the moonlight he saw the stumpy forms of some goblins.

“ One, two, three,” he began to sing, and away went the goblins, snarling and screeching. “ What in the world were they after?” thought Curdie. Then he remembered Princess Irene and felt sure they were angry with him for saving her from them. Now, they had come to see if they could do something spiteful to him.

In the morning, he had forgotten all about the goblins as he followed his father into the mine. They went in through an arch of rocks out of which flowed a small stream of water. Once inside, little halls ran off in all directions. These were where the miners had dug into the mountain to find gold and silver ore. They were all as dark as a pocket, and to see to dig, the miners had to carry little lamps on the brims of their caps. They could tell when the day was done only by the fact that they were tired out.

If any one wanted to earn more money than usual, he went on working after the other men were gone, for the night was just as good to work in as the day. This was what Curdie was thinking of doing, for he wanted to buy a present for his mother. So when his father stopped work, Curdie told him that he thought he would stay on and work.

“Very well,” said his father. “You are not afraid of the goblins any more than I am.”

“Oh, no!” said Curdie. “It is easy enough to sing verses to scare them. No, I am not afraid.” So his father went off and left him, and soon after, all the other miners were gone too. For some time, Curdie worked away briskly, digging out ore and piling it up to carry out in the morning. After a little, he began to hear tap-tap-tapping all through the mountain as if other miners were about. He knew, of course, that the men were all gone and felt sure that these were goblins tapping. He knew, too, that night was the goblins’ day, but he wondered what they were working at.

About midnight, he stopped to eat some lunch and rest a little. He sat down on a heap of stones and leaned his head against the wall behind him. At once, he heard a queer goblin voice speaking behind

the very rock he was leaning against. He listened as quietly as a mouse, and then heard the words plainly. "Hadn't we better be moving?" A rougher and deeper voice answered, "There is no hurry. That wretched boy will not break through into here tonight. He has gone by the thinnest place now. He will have to go on a yard or two further to find another as thin. These miners are always driving us out of house and home by digging through into our caves. I'd like to scratch them into strings. If this boy had struck here," said the goblin, tapping the very rock behind Curdie's head, "he would have come through. But we will move tonight and get away from him. So, Helfer, get out the big chest. That is your business, you know."

"It is awfully heavy," said Helfer. "Still I could carry ten times as much if it were not for my feet."

"That *is* your weak point, my boy, I know. It is the weak point of all goblins. All goblin feet are soft."

"But our heads are hard enough, father," said Helfer. "Yes, yes, no one can hurt us by striking our heads. But if he strikes our feet, we are done for."

"Well, why don't we wear shoes, then, like the sun people?"

“Because we hate them! Think of a goblin doing anything the sun people do! No! The king would never allow it.”

“But, father, the queen wears shoes.”

“I know she does. And do you know why? Because she is vain—nothing else! You see the first queen our king married was a sun woman. She died when our prince was born. Afterward, the king married one of our own people. But as the first queen had worn shoes, the second one was determined to do so, also. She was afraid we would not think her so great a lady if she didn’t!”

“How silly! But why do the sun people wear shoes, dad?” “Ah, I know! They wear them to hide their feet because they are so hideous. Their feet are not rounded off nice and smooth like ours. They have toes!”

“Toes! What in the world are toes? Toes! Ugh!”

“The ends of their feet are split up into five or six thin pieces called toes.”

“How horrible! No wonder they wear shoes! We goblins do not need them. Our feet are handsome!”

“They must be curious things though—the shoes,” said Helfer’s voice. “I’d like to try them to see how they feel.”

“ If you ever say that again, Helfer,” said the mother goblin’s voice, “ I’ll hit your feet! See if I don’t. Come, take up your chest and start! ”

“ But, mother, it is just to carry such loads as that that shoes might be good for something! ”

A scream followed, which made Curdie think that the mother goblin had made good her threat and struck Helfer’s feet.

“ Come, hurry up! ” growled the father. “ I want to go to the palace and hear what they are planning to do to these horrid miners. They are talking it over tonight. I’ll see you into our new house and then I’ll hurry on to the palace. So come along. Podge, you take all those chairs and tables. My dear, you see to the beds and bedding. Here, Helfer, I’ll help you get the chest on your back and you start on ahead.”

Then they all began to bustle around getting their things together to carry to the new home.

“ Well,” said Curdie to himself, “ I have found out two or three very important things. In the first place, I know why we hear them tapping around us at night. The miners are digging through into their caves and they are making themselves new homes. I have found out, too, that their feet are their weak

spot. I shall know where to strike them if they try to harm me. But what was he saying about talking it over at the palace? Something they are going to do to the miners? Oh, I must find out about that!"

Then a bright thought struck him. What if he made a hole through that thin place back of his head? Perhaps he could get through and follow the father goblin to the palace. He could not dig, of course, for they would hear him. But he began to feel the wall with his hands and soon found that some of the stones were loose enough to be drawn out with little noise. Laying hold of a large one, with both his hands, he drew it gently out and let it down softly.

"What was that noise?" said the father goblin. Curdie at once blew out his light lest it should shine through.

"It must be that boy miner who stayed behind the rest," said the mother.

"No, he has been gone a good while. I haven't heard a blow for an hour. Besides, it wasn't like that!"

"Then I suppose it must have been a stone carried down by the brook inside."

"Perhaps. Well, it will have more room by and by," said the father, laughing.

"Now what does that mean?" thought Curdie

to himself. "What is the brook inside and why will it have more room by and by?"

He lay quite still, but heard no more except the sounds they made in moving around to get ready to go. Curdie was anxious to know if the stone he had taken out had left a hole into the goblins' house. He put in his hand to feel around. It went in a good way and then came against something soft. He had but a moment to feel it over when it was drawn quickly away. It was one of the toeless goblin feet. The owner gave a cry of fright.

"What is the matter, Helfer?" asked his mother.

"A beast came out of the wall and licked my feet!"

"Nonsense! There are no wild beasts in our country," said his father.

"But it was, father! I felt it!"

"Nonsense, I say! Our country is not like that one above in the sun. That is swarming with wild beasts!"

"But I did feel it, father!"

"I tell you to hold your tongue! You slander our country!"

Curdie kept himself from laughing and lay as

still as a mouse—but no stiller. Every moment, he kept nibbling away with his fingers at the edge of the hole. He was slowly making it bigger, for here the rock had been broken up with the blasting the miners had done.

At length, he heard once more what the goblin father was saying to his family. “Now then, get your bundles on your backs. Here, Helfer, I’ll help you up with your chest. Make haste! I must go to the meeting at the palace tonight. After that, we can come back and clear out the rest of our things before our enemies return in the morning. Now light your torches and come along! How much better it is to make our own light instead of having to wait for that thing hung up in the air—the sun! And what a glare it makes, too! Enough to put our eyes out! But those miserable sun people can’t do any better!”

Again Curdie could hardly keep from laughing. A sound of many soft feet followed but soon ceased. Curdie flew at the hole like a tiger and tore and pulled. The sides gave way and it was soon large enough for him to crawl through. He did not wait to light his lamp. Anyway, the torches of the goblins as they walked off in a straight line up a long

avenue from the door of their cave threw back light enough to let him look around their old home.

To his surprise, it was nothing but an ordinary cave in the rocks. He had seen many like it. The goblins had talked of coming back for the rest of their things. But he did not see a thing that would have showed that any one had ever lived there. The floor was rough and stony, the walls full of corners. The roof in one place was twenty feet high, in another so low he could strike his forehead against it. On one side, a stream, no thicker than a needle it is true, but still large enough to make a wide, damp streak over the wall, flowed down the face of the rock.

“Can this be the brook they spoke of?” said Curdie to himself. “Yes, it must be, for it is inside. But how is it going to have more room by and by?”

He did not stop to think more about it then. He wanted above all things not to lose sight of the goblins. He wanted to follow the father goblin to the palace and hear what it was they were talking over. So he paid no more attention to the goblins' home. He hurried to the door of the cave and looked out to see if the goblins were still in sight.

CURDIE ATTENDS A MEETING AT THE KING'S PALACE.

Yes, there was the troop of goblins, toiling along under their heavy bundles. There was Helfer with the huge chest on his bending shoulders. And there was another form almost buried under what looked like a feather bed. "Where do they get the feathers?" thought Curdie with a smile. The next moment, the goblins disappeared around a turn in the way. Curdie hurried after them lest they should be around the next turning before he saw them again. If so, he might lose them altogether.

He reached the corner and looked around it carefully. He saw them again a little way down another long passage. As he followed along after them, he took notice of these passages he was going through. No miner had ever seen them before—that he was sure of. Pointed pieces of rock like huge stone icicles hung from the roofs. Curdie knew by their size that they were far older than the mines the men had dug in the mountain. The floors were covered with large stones. Curdie knew from their smooth

round look that water had once run through the passage and worn them smooth.

At each corner, he waited till the goblins had gone around the next. Then he followed them through one passage after another. These grew higher and higher as he went on. They were more and more covered with the shining stone icicles which had wonderful colors in them.

Once he got so close to the goblins that he saw something he had not noticed before—a lot of goblin animals that crowded around their feet. “They may not have any *wild* animals down here,” said Curdie, remembering what the goblin father had said to Helfer. “But they seem to have a lot of tame ones. And what strange looking things they are!”

However, he forgot the animals presently, for turning a corner too quickly, he almost rushed into the middle of the goblin family. They had already set down their bundles on the floor of a cave much larger than the one they had left. They were quite out of breath with their walk or he would have heard them talking. However, he darted back before they saw him. He stood in a shadow watching till the father should come out to go to the palace.

Before long, both the father goblin and his son,

Helfer, appeared and kept on in the same direction. Curdie watched his chance. He slipped by the door of the cave while the others were busy with their things, and hurried after. He heard now the rush of a river flowing inside the rock. As he went on, a far-off noise like a great shouting reached his ears, but it presently ceased. After a little, he thought he heard a single voice that sounded clearer and clearer till he could almost hear the words. Round one more corner he slipped after the goblins and then stopped in amazement.

He was at the entrance of a magnificent cavern. It had once been a huge basin full of water. Now the water was gone and it had become the great palace hall of the goblins. It was very, very high, and the roof was full of beautifully colored stone icicles. These threw back the light of the goblins' torches.

The walls were largely of shining stones. And goblins! goblins! goblins everywhere! Goblins without number. Curdie wondered if he could sing rhymes enough to put them all to flight. But he did not try it, for he wanted to hear what they were talking about.

At the other end of the hall was a platform where the wall sloped back on the level for quite a space.

On this sat the king and his court—the king on a throne made out of a huge piece of green stone, and the court on lower seats around it. The king had been making them a speech. The shouting that followed it was what Curdie had heard as he came along. One of the court was now speaking, and this was what Curdie heard him say:

“ So you see, his Majesty has been thinking over two plans to help his people. The sun people know very well that we used to live where they live now and that we came away for the best of reasons. They know that we are much smarter than they—as much smarter as they are bigger than we. Still they look down on us and insult us. But now, thanks to his Majesty, we are going to punish them. Very soon now, we shall have ready our plan to punish them.”

“ May it please your Majesty!” cried a voice close to the door. Curdie knew at once that it was the voice of the father goblin.

“ Who is that speaking?” cried some one near the throne.

“ Glump!” answered several voices near the door.

“ Glump is our trusty subject,” said the king himself, in a slow and stately voice. “ Let him come

forward and speak." A lane was made through the crowd, and Glump went up to the platform, bowed low to his Majesty, and spoke as follows: "Sire, I would not have spoken only I know how near the time is for the plan that is being talked of. By tomorrow, very likely, the enemy will have broken through into my house. The wall between is now not more than a foot thick."

"It is not as thick as that," said Curdie to himself, laughing so softly that the goblins did not hear him.

"This very evening," Glump went on, "I have taken away my things. So the sooner we carry out your Majesty's magnificent plan the better. I may just add that in the last few days a little stream of water has come through into my dining room. As I know how the river flows at whose mouth the miners come into the mountain, I am sure a deep gulf is just behind the wall of my house. It will not be hard to let the water through at that spot."

Then Glump bowed to his Majesty and came down into the crowd again. The goblin who had spoken first now arose once more.

"The news which our worthy Glump has given us," he said, "is very welcome. But we shall not

need to act on it at once. His Majesty wishes to try his other plan first. Just what this plan is his Majesty can not now explain. If all goes well—and who dares to think a plan of his Majesty could fail!—his Royal Highness, the prince, heir to his Majesty, will have something which he can hold as a pledge for the good conduct of his relatives. If not, we shall carry out the plan of which our worthy Glump has spoken.”

Curdie now saw that the meeting was about over. He was not to hear anything more about either of his Majesty’s plans. It was best for him to slip away before the goblins began to leave the hall. He was not likely to meet any men goblins, for they were all at this meeting. But he had not brought his own lamp. So he might easily take the wrong path on his way back if he did not go slowly and carefully.

He got back to Glump’s new home all right. He watched his chance to dart by the door without being seen. After that, he was entirely without light. If he lost his way, it would be very hard to find it again. And the morning would not bring any more light into these places in the mountain.

Moreover, he was anxious to get back through the

hole he had made and stop it up before the goblins found him. Not that he was afraid of them, but he wanted to find out more about their plans. He was sure he could not do it if they found out that some one was watching them.

How he wished he had brought his lamp! He wished it all the more when, after a while, he found his way blocked up and could go no further. It was of no use to turn back. He had not the least idea where he had begun to go wrong. He kept feeling about over the walls around him. Presently, his hand came upon a place where a tiny stream of water was running down the face of the rock.

“ The brook! ” he said to himself. “ The inside brook! Why, I must be in Glump’s old dining room. What a stupid I am! Here I am at the end of the way and didn’t know it. And there are the goblins, coming to fetch the rest of their things! ”

Sure enough, there was the red light from their torches up the long avenue that led to the cave. In a moment, Curdie had thrown himself on the floor and wriggled backward through the hole. The floor on the outer side was a foot or two lower and that made it easier to get back. It was all he could do

to lift the largest stone he had taken out of the hole. But he managed to shove it in again. Then he sat down on a heap of ore to think.

He was pretty sure now that he knew what the goblins' second plan was. It was to let the water through from that gulf which Glump said was just on the other side of his old house. That little stream which wet his dining room wall came from it. Through the hole that Curdie had made, the river would flow into the mine. It would fill up all the miners' passages. It would drown all the miners who happened to be in the mountain at that time.

Curdie saw that the miners could prevent this in this way. They could fill up the whole passage where he was sitting, building it in tight and strong. But the goblins were not going to begin on this at once. His Majesty was going to try his other plan first—whatever that was. And Curdie saw that he could safely leave open a while longer the hole he had made. He could go in and out through it and find out something about his Majesty's other plan.

He would see at once if they gave any signs of setting about turning the river into the mine. Then he would know that his Majesty's first plan had

failed. The miners could quickly fill up the passage and stop the river from coming through.

As soon as the goblins had gone away, he lighted his lamp. He piled up the stones around the hole so that no one would notice it. Then he thought he would go home and get some sleep. His father let him in when he got home and Curdie told him all about the goblins' doings and plans. His father was sure that Curdie had done the right thing about the hole. They would still go there at times, he said, and tap-tap around. That would make the goblins think they were still working there. Meantime, they would keep a sharp lookout to see what was going to happen.

PRINCESS IRENE FINDS HER FAIRY GRANDMOTHER AGAIN.

After that time on the mountain when she had been scared by the goblins, Lootie did not care about taking the princess out for a walk. There had been many fine days on which Irene would have liked to stay out as long as she could. But as like as not, Lootie would take to her heels when nothing worse than a fleecy cloud crossed the sun and threw a shadow on the hillside. Many an evening they were home a full hour before the sunlight left the weathercock on the stables.

If Lootie had not acted in this way, Irene would soon have forgotten all about the goblins. She never forgot Curdie. But that was because she had promised him a kiss and felt sure he would come back to get it.

One day, when Irene was playing in her garden, she heard the sound of a horn far away. She jumped up with a cry of joy. She knew by that that the king, her papa, was coming to see her. Away she rushed to the big gate to meet him. Soon, here came a troop of horsemen with spears and banners.

Her father was riding in the midst of them. The king was the tallest of them all, and wore a narrow circlet of gold set with jewels around his helmet.

He stooped and caught up Irene and placed her on the horse before him. In this way, they rode up to the house. After they had had some lunch, Irene took her king-papa out to see her beautiful garden. She led him all around and at last they sat down to talk beside a big rock. Irene loved this rock, for out of the other side of it ran a clear little stream that came from inside the mountain. Irene was never tired of playing in it.

Now as they sat down, her king-papa said, "What would my dear little daughter like best to do?" Irene had already been thinking about it and said at once, "I would like you to take me to see my fairy grandmother." The king looked surprised and said, "What do you mean, little Irene?"

"I mean my fairy grandmother—Queen Irene—who lives at the top of the house—a very old lady, you know, with long hair of silver."

"She's got her crown in her bedroom," she went on, "but I've not been in there yet. You know she's there, do you not?"

"No," said the king very quietly.

“Then it *must* be all a dream,” said Irene. “I half thought it was, but I could not be sure. Now, I *am* sure of it. Besides I could not find her the next time. So she must be a dream.”

Just then a white pigeon flew down and hovered over her head. Irene looked up at it and could not feel so sure that it was a dream, after all.

It seems that her king-papa knew that she and Lootie had been out too late one evening. Now, who could have told him that? Irene was sure it was not Curdie. But she could not think who else it was.

Her king-papa did not tell her who it was, but he spoke severely to Lootie though he did not send her away. But when he went away, he left six of his men behind. He gave orders that three of them should watch around the house every night, walking around and around it from sunset to sunrise. It was clear that he was not quite easy about the princess.

Winter came on after a while and it was too stormy to go out much. By that time, Irene had played with her toys so often that they no longer pleased her. So sometimes she went to the kitchen to see the maids. Sometimes she talked to the men

her king-papa had left behind. She wished Curdie would come to see her. And more than all, how she did wish her fairy grandmother had not been a dream and she could go up and see *her* again!

One morning, Lootie left her with the house-keeper a while. This kind old person turned out on a table for her all the things that were in a curious old cabinet. Irene found many strange things she had never seen before. As she was turning over a queer old breast-pin, she ran the pin of it into her thumb. Of course she gave a little scream, but would not have thought any more about it. Only, the pain got worse and her thumb began to swell.

Lootie came back and the doctor was sent for. He bound up the princess's thumb and they put her to bed long before the usual time. Her thumb hurt her so she thought at first she could never go to sleep. She did at last, however, and then she dreamed and dreamed and dreamed.

In the middle of the night, she woke up. The moon was shining into the room. The cloth had come off her thumb and it was burning hot. She thought it would cool it if she held it in the moon-light. Without waking Lootie, she got up and stole over to the window. Then she saw one of her king-

papa's men in the garden. She was going to call to him and tell him about her thumb but remembered that that would wake Lootie.

So she thought she would go into the next room and call to him from there. She crept away to a door and opened it. And there she was at the foot of the old stair-case! The moon was shining down it from some window high up in the wall. At once she started up it. A great longing woke up in her heart to see if she could not find once more the old, old lady with the silvery hair.

“If she *is* a dream,” she said to herself, “perhaps I shall find her, for very likely, I am dreaming too. I shall just wake up soon and find myself in my own bed in the nursery.”

Up and up she went, stair after stair, down the passages and past the many rooms—all just as she had seen them before. As if she had known every step of the way, she walked straight to the door at the foot of the steep narrow stair. Up this she crept on her hands and feet. Yes, there was the hum of the spinning-wheel again. As soon as she tapped at the door, “Come in, Irene,” said the sweet voice.

The moonlight was streaming into the room. Right in the middle of it sat her fairy grandmother

in her black velvet gown with the rich lace on it. Her hair was flowing over her shoulders like a stream of silver.

“Come in, dear,” she said again. “Come and tell me what you think I am spinning.”

“I don’t know, dear fairy grandmother,” said the princess. “Please, I thought you were a dream. Why could I not find you before?”

“That is one reason,” said the old lady, “because you let yourself think I was a dream. People who do not believe things are real, never can find them. If you were to bring Lootie here, she would not see me. She would just rub her eyes and say it was a dream.”

Irene knew this was true. She remembered that Lootie did not believe a word of it when she told her about her fairy grandmother. She made up her mind that she, Irene, would never again doubt it. She would never doubt that her fairy grandmother was real—and not just a dream!

“You have not tried to tell me what I am spinning, dear,” said her fairy grandmother. “No,” said the princess, “I can not think what it is. But it is very pretty.”

It was indeed very pretty stuff. In the moon-

light, it shone—not just like silver, and yet not like anything else. The thread the old lady drew out was so fine that Irene could hardly see it.

“ I am spinning this for you, dear little Irene,” said her fairy grandmother.

“ For me! What am I to do with it? ”

“ I will tell you by and by. First, I will tell you what it is. It is spider webs—of a very rare sort. My pigeons bring it to me from over the seas. There is only one forest where the spiders live who make this sort—the finest and strongest of any. I have nearly finished spinning what I have.”

“ Do you work all day and all night too, fairy grandmother? ”

“ Not at night, except when the moon shines upon my wheel—as it does now. I can’t work much longer tonight.”

“ And what will you do next, dear grandmother? ”

“ Go to bed. Would you like to see my bedroom? ”

“ Yes, that I should! ”

“ Then come with me.” Her fairy grandmother rose and took Irene’s hand. It was her bad hand and Irene gave a little cry of pain.



SHE RUBBED THE OINTMENT GENTLY ALL OVER THE HOT, SWOLLEN HAND

“ My child ! ” said her grandmother. “ What is the matter ? ”

Irene held her hand into the moonlight and told her all about it. Her fairy grandmother took her other hand and led her into the room opposite.

What was Irene’s surprise to find the loveliest room she had ever seen in her life ! In the centre hung a lamp as round as a ball, shining as if with the brightest moonlight. It lit up everything in the room, but not so brightly that Irene could tell what all the things were.

A large oval bed stood in the middle of the room. It had a coverlet of rose color and velvet curtains all around it, of a lovely pale blue. The walls were also blue, spangled all over with what looked like stars of silver.

While she was looking about her, her grandmother took out a little box of ointment of the sweetest odor—all roses and lilies. She rubbed this ointment all over the hot, swollen hand.

“ Oh, grandmother, it is *so* nice ! ” said Irene. “ Thank you ! ”

“ I don’t think I can let you go away tonight,” said her grandmother. “ Do you think you would like to sleep with me ? ”

“ Oh yes, yes, dear grandmother! ” said Irene.

Her grandmother got a little silver basin full of water so that Irene might wash her feet. Then she was ready for bed. And what a delicious bed it was into which her grandmother laid her!

“ Are you going to put out your moon? ” asked the princess.

“ That never goes out, day or night. In the darkest night, if any of my pigeons are out on a message, they always see it and know where to fly.”

“ But if somebody beside the pigeons were to see it—somebody about the house, and come and find you? ”

“ Do you think they would believe me anything but a dream? I will tell you a secret, dear. If that light were to go out, even you would think this all a dream. You would fancy yourself lying in a bare garret on a heap of old straw. You would not see one of the pleasant things about you.”

“ I hope it will never go out! ” cried Irene.

“ I hope not, too. But now, I am going to put you to a trial, Irene. Listen, dear, very carefully. This night week, you must come back to me. Can you remember? If you don't, I do not know when you

will find me again. And you will soon want me very much.”

“ Oh please do not let me forget then, dear grandmother! ”

“ You shall not forget—only will you be able to believe that I am anything but a dream? ”

“ I will try—*hard!* ” said the little princess.

“ Then good-night! ” said her fairy grandmother.

The next moment, Irene was asleep and in the midst of the loveliest dreams. When she woke the next morning, she was in her own bed and her hand was perfectly well.

THE GOBLIN ANIMALS ON THE LAWN.

Curdie spent many nights in the mine after this. He and his father told his mother all about it. Curdie was very fond of his mother, and did not want her to be anxious about him.

When the other miners had gone, Curdie always went into the passage where he had made the hole into Glump's old home. There he would tap-tap-tap on the walls to make the goblins think he was still working there. Then he would open the hole and slip through to find out all he could of what the goblins were doing. But he remembered how near he had come to getting lost that first night. He did not want that to happen again. He could not take his lamp for fear the goblins would see it. So he bought a large ball of fine twine and tied the end to his pick-ax which he left by the door. Then, with the ball in his hand, unrolling as he went, he set out on his trip.

For the first few nights, he saw nothing worth remembering. But one night, he heard the noise of their tools. He followed it up, and came upon a company of goblins digging out a passage-way.

This was not to let the water run through—that was plain. It was too far away from the river for that. Besides they were not going to do that right away, as he knew. It must be that they were digging themselves a passage to get to some place. But where were they going?

Curdie could not find out. He watched and watched and got his string much tangled up in doing it. Often he had to dodge and run, and slip around corners in a great hurry to keep from being seen. But however tangled his string was when he took it home to his mother, she could always untangle it. By morning, she always had it straightened out and rolled up into a neat ball for him.

Just about this time, the men the king had left to watch around the house of the little princess by night began to see strange things. At first, it was just one man who said he saw a very horrid looking beast. It had stood with its forefeet on the window sill, staring into the house. It had run away, turning on him a face like a boy's jack-o-lantern. The other five men only laughed at him.

The second night, another man saw an equally strange and horrid beast. The other four men then laughed at *him*. The third night, a third man saw

one and that left only three to laugh. Three nights more and all six had seen one and there was no one left to laugh.

The six men could not agree as to how these animals looked. But all said that the noises they made were not grunts, nor squeals, nor roars, nor howls, nor barks, nor yells, nor screams, nor croaks, nor hisses, nor mews, nor shrieks, but a mixture of all these together.

Now Curdie could have told them what they were. The first night he followed Glump, he had seen animals like them around the goblins' feet. They were the goblins' tame animals. They had once been like real animals, just as the goblins had been like real men. But they had grown very queer, and misshapen, and hideous from living underground. They were more unlike sun animals than the goblins were unlike sun men.

Perhaps Curdie could have guessed, too, how they came out on the lawn by Irene's house. In following the goblins digging out their passage, he saw that they had made a hole through the floor. This went down into a little stream of water—the same little stream that flowed out under the big rock in Irene's garden.

Now the animals always tagged along after the

goblins, as our dogs tag *us*. They found this hole and went down it to see where it went. Thus they found their way out by the big rock upon the garden lawn. It was such a lovely place to gambol and play that they came back night after night. And they peered and peeked all about the strange house they found in the big garden. All this happened during the week that came after Irene found her way up to her fairy grandmother again. All that week, you know, the princess was trying hard to remember to go up again at the end of it. What was harder, she was trying to be sure she did not think it was all a dream. Often she would sit and think about it so quietly that Lootie thought something was the matter with her.

At length, the last day of the week came. Irene thought it would never be evening! She tried to play with her doll-house and her dolls, but got very tired of them. When it began to grow dark, Lootie said, "I see you want your tea, princess. I will go and get it. The room feels so close, I will open the window a little. The evening is mild. It won't hurt you."

Irene was thinking so hard of her fairy grandmother that she did not notice how long Lootie was gone. When she looked up, it was quite dark. And

there at the window—look!—a pair of eyes, bright with a green light, and glowering at her through the window! It was one of those hideous goblin animals! The next instant, it leaped into the room.

“ It was like a cat with legs as long as those of a horse! ” Irene said afterward. “ But its body was no bigger and its legs no thicker than those of a cat! ” The princess was too frightened to cry out. But she was not too frightened to jump from her chair and run out of the room.

Just outside the nursery, she came to the foot of the old stair. Now, of course, she ought to have run straight up it to her fairy grandmother. But suppose that dreadful creature should chase her up the stairs! Suppose it should run after her down all those long passages! Suppose she should not find the little steep stair up to her grandmother’s room in the tower!

Her heart failed her at the thought! She rushed along the hall and out of the front door. She darted into the court-yard with the creature after her—as she thought! Not waiting to see if it was, she dashed through the gate and up the side of the mountain. She ran and ran and ran, always thinking the hideous animal was just behind her. At last, she could

run no further and fell down without even breath enough to scream.

But nothing touched her, and after a little, she got half way up and peered all around. It was now so dark that she could see nothing. Not a single star was out. She could not even tell in what direction her house was. But between it and her, that awful animal was waiting to catch her! If she called for help, perhaps some of those goblins would come and get her!

“No one was so miserable in all the world!” she thought. Oh, where, where was her home! She had forgotten all about her fairy grandmother. But presently, a raindrop fell on her face. She looked up and saw a beautiful light in the air above her. At first, she thought it was the rising moon. Then she saw it was a great silvery globe, hanging in the air.

As she gazed at the lovely thing, she grew braver. What could it be? Could it be—No, it couldn't! But what if it should be—yes, it *must* be—her fairy grandmother's lamp which guided her pigeons home through the darkest night!

Up jumped the little princess! She had only to keep that light in sight to find her way home.

Quickly, yet softly, she walked down the hill. Perhaps she would get by the creature unseen. No fear of losing her way! She had only to look at the lamp a minute and she could see the path before her as plain as could be!

On and on she went, when all at once the lamp vanished! Her terror rose again! But just then, she saw the lights in the windows of her home. She hurried forward as fast as she could. She found the gate and ran in through the front door which was still open. Along the hall she flew, without even looking into the nursery, to the foot of the old stair.

Up she bounded, and up; ran through the first passage and the next and the next; found the little steep stair-case and clambered right up it to her fairy grandmother's door.

When Lootie first missed her little princess, she thought Irene was hiding from her to play a trick. It was not till some time after that she began to search for her. When Irene came back in through the front door, no one saw her. They were all searching through the rest of the house. A few seconds after she climbed the little steep stair, they began to search the empty rooms above. But by this time, the princess was knocking at her grandmother's door.

HER FAIRY GRANDMOTHER GIVES IRENE A PRESENT.

“Come in, Irene,” said the silvery voice of her fairy grandmother.

The princess opened the door and peeped in. The room was quite dark and there was no sound of the spinning wheel. She grew frightened once more. The room was there, but was not her grandmother a dream, after all? Every little girl knows how dreadful it is to find a room empty when she thought some one was there. Irene had to fancy for a moment that the person she came to find was nowhere at all. Then she remembered that her grandmother spun on moonlight nights only and this night was cloudy.

Just then she heard the voice again saying, “Come in, Irene.” Ah, she knew now! It came from the room opposite—her fairy grandmother’s bedroom. She turned around and opened the other door. Oh, what a lovely haven to reach from the darkness and fear through which she had come!

The soft light made her feel as if she were going into the heart of the milkiest pearl. The blue walls and their silver stars seemed for a moment to be

really the sky which she had left outside covered with rain clouds.

“ I’ve lighted a fire for you, Irene. You are cold and wet,” said her fairy grandmother.

Irene looked and saw that the fire on the hearth was like a big bunch of red roses between the silver wings of two cherubs. The room was full of the sweet smell of the roses.

And her grandmother was so beautiful! She was dressed in the loveliest pale blue velvet. Her hair was no longer white but a rich golden color. It flowed down like a golden mist from a silver band with pearls and opals in it. Her slippers were covered with seed pearls and opals in a mass so that they gave off a soft, milky-white light.

As she looked at her lovely fairy grandmother, Irene felt how dirty she herself was from the mud and rain of the mountain side. And when her grandmother held out her hand, she went up to her very slowly.

“ Have you been doing something wrong, Irene? ” asked her grandmother sweetly.

“ I think I *must*,” said Irene. “ I should have come straight up to you, should I not, instead of running out on the mountain side when the long-

legged cat came, and making myself such a fright. I ought to have a bath."

"I could give you one," said her grandmother smiling. "Look behind you."

The princess looked and saw a large oval tub of silver shining in the light of the wonderful lamp. She went up close to see it.

"What do you see, Irene?"

"The sky and the moon and the stars," she answered. "It looks as if there was no bottom to it either."

"You would have a lovely bath in it," said her fairy grandmother. "But I must not give you one tonight. You must go down stairs presently. Your people are much frightened about you and are searching everywhere. You must tell them about the long-legged cat. But they would not believe you if you were not looking wet and dirty."

"Was that your beautiful lamp that I saw, grandmother, which led me back to the house?"

"Yes, dear. I made it shine through the walls out to you in the dark. Now sit down in my chair by the fire a moment. I have a present to give you before you go back."

Irene sat down in the low chair and her grand-

mother left her, shutting the door behind her. The child sat gazing now at the rose-fire, now at the starry walls, now at the silvery light. A great quietness came over her heart. If all the long-legged cats in the world had come running helter skelter at her then, she would not have been afraid for a single moment!

In a few minutes, her grandmother came back with a beautiful smile on her face. She had a little shining ball in her hand about the size of a pigeon egg.

“ There, Irene, there is my work for you. Do you remember that I told you I was spinning something out of spider webs for you? ”

She held out the ball to the little princess. Irene took it in her hand and looked it over. It sparkled a little, and shone here and shone there.

“ How pretty it is, grandmother. But what am I to do with it? ”

“ I will show you.” She went to a cabinet in which was a tiny box and came back with a little gold ring. She took the ball and did something with the two—Irene did not see what.

“ Now, give me your hand, my dear.”

Irene held up her hand and her fairy grandmother slipped the little ring on her finger.

“ Oh, what a beautiful ring! ” cried Irene in delight. “ And the lovely, *lovely* stone! ”

“ It is a fire opal,” said her grandmother.

“ Am I to keep it, dear fairy grandmother? ”

“ Yes, dear, always.”

“ It is prettier than any stone I ever saw—except those on your head. Please, is that your crown? ”

“ Yes, Irene, and the stone in your ring is like these in my crown.”

Then her grandmother took the little ball of spider webs and put it into the box from which she had taken the ring.

“ But, dear grandmother,” said the princess, “ am I not to have the ball too? ”

“ Yes, dear child, you have it.”

“ No, no, you just put it into the box! Are you going to keep it for me? I thought I was to take it with me! ”

“ You *are* to take it with you. I’ve fastened the end of it to your ring.”

Irene looked at her ring. “ I can’t see it there, grandmother,” she said.

“ Feel—a little way from your ring,” said her fairy grandmother.

“ Oh, I do feel it! ” cried the princess. “ But I

can't see it," she added, looking close to her hand.

"No, the thread is too fine for you to see it. You can only feel it. And, now, listen, Irene! If ever you find yourself in any danger—such as you were in this evening—you must take off your ring and put it under the pillow of your bed. Then you must lay your finger upon the thread and follow wherever it leads you."

"Oh, how delightful! It will lead me to you, grandmother, I know!"

"Yes, but it may seem to you a very round-about way indeed. But you must never doubt the thread. Of one thing be sure. While you hold it, I hold it too."

"But," said Irene, "won't the thread get in somebody's way? Won't it be broken if one end is fast to my ring and the other in your little box?"

"No, that will come out all right. Now, dear, you must go."

"Please, I want to ask you one question more. Is it because you have your crown on that you look so young?"

"No, dear!" said her grandmother gaily. "It is because I am a *fairy* grandmother. Fairy grandmothers can look any age. I thought you would like

to see me like this. Then, perhaps, you would try harder than ever not to think me just a dream."

"That I will, dear fairy grandmother!" cried the little princess. She lifted her arms and her grandmother caught her up. She threw her arms about her grandmother's neck and snuggled down on her shoulder. And there she was, fast asleep in an instant! When she woke up, she was sitting in her own high chair before her doll-house in the nursery.

At that moment, Lottie came in sobbing. When she saw Irene sitting there, she gave a loud cry of joy.

"My precious, darling princess! Where have you been! What has happened to you! We've all been crying our eyes out and searching the house from top to bottom for you!"

"Not quite from the *top*," said Irene to herself. She might have added, "Not quite to the *bottom*." For there was something going on there that none of them knew anything about.

When Irene told about the long-legged cat that frightened her so that she ran up the mountain, Lottie felt like scolding her.

"Why did you not call out and run to me? It was very foolish to run out of the house!" And

Irene could see that she did not half believe in the cat. "Well, Lootie," said the little princess, "if you had seen a cat all legs running at you, you might not have known what was the wisest thing to do! That night on the mountain, when one of those strange creatures came at you, you were so frightened you lost your way home!"

After that, Lootie could not say anything more. But if Lootie did not believe in the cat, the men who guarded the house *did*. They had seen things quite like it. From this on, they had the front door and all the windows on the ground floor locked as soon as the sun was down and not opened till morning.

When the princess awoke the next morning, her nurse was bending over her.

"How your ring does glow this morning, princess—just like a fiery rose."

"Does it, Lootie?" said Irene. "Who gave me this ring, Lootie? I know I've had it a long time, but where did I get it? I don't remember."

"I think it must have been your mother gave it to you, princess. But as long as you've worn it, I don't remember that I ever heard," said Lootie.

"I will ask my king-papa the next time he comes," said Irene.

It was not long before her king-papa came again. When he heard about the long-legged cat and the other animals, from the men he had left, he looked very grave. He at once ordered six other of his men to stay behind and guard the princess's house. With twelve men, she ought to be very safe.

When he saw the ring on Irene's finger, a beautiful smile came over his face. "Where did I get it, king-papa?" asked the princess. "It was your queen-mama's once," he answered. Then he looked so sad she did not say anything more about it. But she thought at once of her fairy grandmother. If fairy grandmothers could look any age, she wondered if her own had not looked like her queen-mama, when she saw her with the beautiful golden crown and the golden hair.

"And before that, she may have looked like my queen-mama's mother's mother," thought the little princess wisely.

CURDIE VISITS THE GOBLIN ROYAL FAMILY.

Night after night, Curdie slipped through the hole he had made into the goblins' part of the mountain. He always found them digging and boring. But watch as he would he seemed no nearer to finding out where they were going. He was getting very tired of dodging around behind them, tangling up his thread and finding out nothing.

One night, he thought there was no use in watching any longer. He began to wind up his string, thinking he would go home. Very soon, he noticed that his string was not leading him to the hole. He passed many more goblin homes than he had ever seen before. He felt that he was in a part of the mountain quite unknown to him.

He made up his mind that he was lost. He kept on following the string, however, for he had nothing else to follow. He knew by the size of the ball in his hand that he was coming to the end of it. But how did it get so far away from the hole? And now there was something tugging and pulling at it. What could that mean?

Turning a sharp corner, he came suddenly into a

scuffling and growling and squeaking, and fell right over a struggling mass of goblin animals. At once, they began to scratch and bite him. Then his hand touched his pick-ax and up he jumped, striking right and left with it. The hideous creatures howled and ran. And Curdie found himself with his pick-ax in his hand and the string still tied to it.

How had his pick-ax come there? The only way Curdie could think of was that these creatures had found it where he left it. Knowing it to be a sun man's tool, they had worried and dragged and hauled it close up to the goblin village. And now what should he do and which way should he turn?

Just then, he saw a curious light ahead, and going up to it, found it was a window filled in with mica. The light was somewhere behind the mica, but he could not see through it. Searching about the place, he found himself in a small chamber. There was an opening high up in the wall and through this the light was shining. He climbed up softly to the opening and looked through it.

Below sat four goblins in front of a fire. And they were goblins of importance, too, for all wore glowing stones set in bands about their heads. Curdie caught his breath, for he saw that they must be

the goblin royal family—the king and the queen and the crown prince. The fourth figure must be an officer of rank, probably the king's prime minister.

Here was a chance to learn something, indeed! Very, very softly, Curdie slipped through the opening and part way down the wall to a ledge. There he sat down and listened with both his ears.

“ That *will* be fun! ” said the crown prince.

“ It's not such a grand affair! ” said the queen in a scornful voice.

Curdie remembered that she was only the step-mother of the crown prince.

“ You must remember, my dear,” said the king, “ that he has the same blood in him. His own mother——”

“ Don't talk to me of his mother! He'd better forget her! ” answered the queen.

“ But, my dear, this is not just a whim of Harelip's! It is state policy. I am sure his pleasure comes from knowing that, does it not, Harelip? ”

“ Yes,” said the prince. “ Of course! Only it will be fun to make her cry! I will have the skin taken off between her toes and tie them up till they grow together! Then she will have no need to wear shoes.”

“ Do you mean to say that I’ve got toes! ” shouted the queen angrily.

(And now Curdie remembered that Glump had said that she wore shoes.)

Just here, the prime minister spoke.

“ Your Royal Highness,” he said to the prince, “ does not forget your own toes—one on one foot and two on the other. Do you not think it would be well to take off the skin and tie them up and have them grow together? ”

“ Ha! ha! ha! ha! ” shouted the queen in glee.

What more they would have said, Curdie never knew. Just here, he slipped and came down on the floor with a great rush of stones. The goblins jumped up, but they were not cowards, and so did not run away.

“ What right have you in my palace? ” asked the king, drawing himself up to his full height.

“ I have lost myself, your Majesty,” said Curdie politely.

“ Well, you will oblige me by walking out of my kingdom at once,” said the king.

“ I will be glad to, your Majesty, if you will give me a guide! ”

“ I will give you a thousand! ” answered the king.

“ One will be enough, your Majesty,” said Curdie, but the king did not listen. Instead, he gave a shout that was half a bellow and half a roar. In an instant, the cave was full of goblins.

“ Put this fellow out of my kingdom!” shouted the king.

The goblins made a rush at Curdie and he began to call out rhymes as fast as he could. That stopped them for a moment. But when he paused to take breath, they rushed upon him again. Curdie struck one on the head with his pick-ax. He saw at once that that did no good. Then he remembered that their heads were hard and their feet were soft.

At once, he sprang forward and stamped on the king's feet. His Majesty rolled over with a most unkingly howl. Curdie stamped on the feet of the goblins right and left. That routed them and away they ran for dear life!

But all at once, there was the queen in front of him. She was so ugly he forgot she was a woman and stamped on her foot. Now the queen wore *granite* shoes, and she gave him such an awful kick in return that he fell down. She grabbed him around the waist, dragged him across the floor, and dashed him into a hole in the wall.

The other goblins swarmed back into the cave and began filling up the opening to the hole with stones. When Curdie, who was half stunned, picked himself up, the hole was closed. They had got a big slab in front of it leaving only a crack. Now they were busy heaping up a great pile of heavy stones against the slab. He tried hard to push his way out but that was more than he could do. There was nothing for it but to sit down and think it over, and he was so tired that he soon fell fast asleep.

He slept a long time, and when he woke, he felt rested and almost well. He was hungry, and well he might be! A whole day had gone by and it was night again. He knew that because he heard the goblins' voices in the outer cave. He knew that they slept during the day and were awake during the night.

Curdie listened as well as he could with his ear to the crack, and soon found that they were talking about himself.

"How long will it take?" asked Harelip, the ugly little crown prince.

"Not many days, I should think," answered the king. "Those sun creatures always want to be eating. I have heard that they have to have three meals a day! I judge a week of starvation will do for him!"

“ I think I ought to have some voice in the matter! ” began the queen.

“ The wretch is yours, my dear! ” interrupted the king. “ You caught him yourself. ”

The queen laughed a long, ugly laugh.

“ Isn't it a pity to waste so much fresh meat? ” she asked.

“ We are not going to give him meat of any kind, my love, fresh or salt! So we shall not waste much on him! ”

“ You do not understand, ” said the queen. “ I do not mean in feeding him. But by the time he is starved, his bones will not be worth picking! ”

The king gave a great laugh.

“ Well, you may have him! I don't fancy him! I am pretty sure he will be tough eating! ”

“ Of course, I would not touch him either! ” cried the queen. “ But our little dogs and cats and pigs and small bears would enjoy him very much! ”

“ You are the best of house-keepers, my lovely queen! ” said the king. “ Let us have our people in to get him out and kill him at once. He deserves it. He has got into our village so far he might do us great harm. ”

“ But after all, ” said the queen, “ he will be very

troublesome to bring out of there alive.” She was probably thinking of the fight of the night before. “Poor creatures as they are,” she went on, “there is something very troublesome about them. I wonder that with our greater strength and skill we do not destroy them and take their country and their belongings.”

“It is worth thinking of,” said the king. “But as you say, they *are* troublesome. And I agree with you that we’d better leave this one in the hole to starve a day or two before we take him out.”

“Once there was a goblin
Living in a hole.
Busy he was, cobbling
A shoe without a sole.”

A voice sang these words out suddenly. Of course, it was Curdie.

“What’s that horrid noise!” cried the queen, shuddering down to her granite shoes.

“It’s that sun creature in the hole!” said the king angrily.

“Come! Stop that noise!” cried out Prince Harelip. “Do, or I’ll break your head!” He was very brave, seeing that Curdie was shut up in the hole.

“ Break away! ” shouted Curdie, and began singing again.

“ Once there was a goblin
Living in a hole——”

“ I really cannot bear it! ” said the queen. “ If I could only get at his horrid toes with my slipper again! ”

“ I think we would better go to bed, ” said the king.

“ It is not time to go to bed, ” said the queen.

“ I would if I were you! ” cried Curdie, and began to sing.

“ Go to bed,
Goblin, do!
Help the queen
Take off her shoe!
If you do,
It will disclose
A horrid set
Of sprouting toes! ”

“ What a lie! ” roared the queen in a rage.

“ That reminds me that I have never seen your feet, my love, ” said the king. “ You really must take your shoes off when you go to bed! ”

“I shall do just as I like!” said the queen sulkily.

“I shall insist upon it!” said his Majesty.

He must have gone up to her as he spoke, for the next minute Curdie heard a howl of pain. Then he knew that the queen must have stamped on the king’s feet.

“Hands off!” cried the queen. “As long as I am queen, I will sleep in my shoes.”

“As you like, my dear,” said the king humbly. “Just as you like, of course.”

Then Curdie heard their feet pattering off into some other room. At once he went to work to see if he could push away the slab that barred the opening to the hole he was in. He gave a great rush with his shoulder, but he did not move it a bit. He made up his mind that the only thing to do was to pretend he was dying. When they found that out, they would take him out. Then he must do his best to break away from them and escape.

And now, if danger threatened Curdie, did it not also threaten Irene? For it was in trying to protect the little princess that Curdie had got into all this trouble. If the goblins starved him to death, who else would follow them up and prevent them from harming her?

THE PRINCESS FOLLOWS THE THREAD.

At all events, that same morning early, Princess Irene awoke in a terrible fright. There was a hideous noise in her room of creatures snarling and hissing.

“That long-legged cat!” she thought at once.

Remembering her fairy grandmother, she snatched the ring off her finger and slipped it under her pillow. At once, her finger touched the thread and she sprang out of bed to follow it. She stepped into her dainty slippers, caught up a long blue cloak from a chair and darted out of the room.

It was indeed a cat that was making part of the noise, though not the goblin creature. This time, it was the cook's black Tom fighting with the housekeeper's little dog. They had bounced against her door which had not been tightly closed, scrambled into her room and under the bed. But the fact that the thread came at once to lead her away showed that her fairy grandmother felt there was danger to her. If it did not come from the cat and dog, perhaps it threatened her by threatening Curdie, who was her friend and protector. We shall see.

When she came to the foot of the old stair-case, Irene expected the thread to go up it. But no, it turned down the hall, through certain narrow passages, toward the kitchen. Then it went out of a small door into the back yard. Now it crossed the yard to a little gate, and out through this on to the mountain side.

“ I could not have got out of the front gate,” thought the princess. “ But the servants get up early and open this one.”

So she went on and on, and up and up, without stopping to think. Her fairy grandmother was leading her and that was enough. It was lovely to be out so early in the morning before the sun was up. She had never done it before in all her life and walked on as happy as could be.

After a while, the thread led her along the bank of a little stream. It was such a pleasure to watch it that Irene did not know how long it was before it led her up to a high cliff out of which it flowed. Then to her surprise and some fear, the thread went right into the mountain up the bed of the stream.

Curdie could have told her that this was where the miners all went in and came out. She hung back a minute, for it was so dark it frightened her. Still

she felt she must go on, and so getting up all her courage, on she went. Somehow, as long as she went straight on with the thread, she felt happy. Whenever she stopped and hung back, she felt afraid. For this reason, she made up her mind to go straight on.

Down one passage after another, each one getting darker and darker, on and on and on! At last, she came to a hole in the wall. Curdie could have told her that this was the hole he had made into Glump's old house. In and out of it, he had come and gone very often. Irene squeezed through it and followed on after her thread.

She passed many goblin homes without knowing it. It was day, of course, outside the mountain, but inside, it was night and the goblins were all asleep. She came after a while to the same mica window which Curdie had seen.

There the thread took her around a corner or two and then into a large cavern. It was here that the king and queen and crown prince had been sitting when Curdie slipped down the wall and in among them.

No one was there now. All had gone to bed. Irene felt her thread cross this cavern, but away up over her head, so that she could hardly reach it.

She clung to it and was terribly frightened. What if it should break and she should lose it!

It didn't break, however. She saw that it had gone to the top of a sloping pile of stones. When she climbed up this, the thread dived down in among the rocks. There she thought she could follow it no further!

For one dreadful moment, she felt that her fairy grandmother had forsaken her. The thread which the spiders had brought from over the sea, which her grandmother had sat in the moonlight and spun for her and tied to her opal ring, had left her!—had gone where she could no longer follow it!—had brought her into this horrible cavern and forsaken her there!

She threw herself down on the heap of stones and began to cry. If she had known that the hideous goblin king and queen were asleep in a cave near by, she would not have made a bit of noise. Or if she had known who was on the other side of that heap of stones in a hole in the wall, she would not have been frightened!

Presently, the thought struck her that she could follow the thread backwards, and so go home again. Up she jumped in joy and felt for her thread. But

she could not feel it backward at all—only forward, down among the stones. She threw herself down again and cried harder than ever. But even as she cried, she kept poking her finger in after the thread among the stones. Hardly knowing what she was about, she dug away some of the stones. Then it struck her that, of course, that was what she must do! And she set to work with a will.

The thread wound in among the stones in such a way that she had to clear off the whole top of the heap. As she got it about half dug down, she heard something which made her nearly fall down with fright. It was a voice close to her and singing—what, do you suppose? Why rhymes, and rhymes, and rhymes! Irene knew that voice at once!

“It’s Curdie! It’s Curdie!” she cried joyfully.

“Hush! Hush! Speak softly,” said Curdie.
“But who are you?”

“I’m Irene!” answered the princess. “My fairy grandmother sent me in here. And now I know why! She sent me to help you get out! I’m digging away these stones as fast as I can!”

“There’s a darling princess!” cried Curdie.
“But you won’t have to dig away all those stones, may-be. If you clear off this slab half way down, I believe I can push it over.”

Irene worked away a little while longer, and then, sure enough, Curdie gave a great push with his shoulder, and over went the slab!

“ You’ve saved my life, Irene! ” cried Curdie joyfully. “ Now, come! We must get out of this at once! ”

He looked around to find his pick-ax, but all he saw was a torch lying on the floor. He snatched it up and lighted it from some coals that were still red in the ashes in the fireplace.

When he turned round after doing this, there was Irene creeping into the hole he had just come out of!

“ No! no! Come back! ” he cried. “ That is not the way out! ”

“ Yes, it is! ” answered Irene. “ This is the way my thread goes! ”

“ Your thread! ” cried Curdie. “ Have you got a string to follow like mine? ”

“ It is my fairy grandmother’s thread made of spider webs,” said Irene. “ And this is the way it goes.”

“ What nonsense the child talks! ” thought Curdie.

But as Irene would not come back, there was nothing to do but follow her. She had risked her life in

the goblin den for him and he would certainly not leave her. Once inside the hole, his torch showed him a narrow passage leading off, no one knew where! When he was shut up there without a light, of course he had not seen it. Now Irene was already out of sight down it. Down he went on his hands and knees and wriggled after her. Even with his torch, he couldn't see her. He was sure he had lost her! Then he turned a sharp corner, and there she stood waiting.

“ This is the way my thread goes,” said the princess. “ Here! Put your hand here! Do you feel it, Curdie? ”

Curdie put up his hand and felt and felt! He could feel nothing at all! Now, he wanted to try to make Irene go back the other way. He had been through that way before and he felt sure there was much more chance of finding the way out. Still she had already found a passage that he had not known of. So rather against his will, he followed on after her.

In a moment or two, he wished indeed that he had made her turn back. They came into a cave where lay two horrible figures asleep. He knew them at once—the king and queen of the goblins! He turned

his torch down quickly, so that it should not wake them. Then he gave it to Irene to hold. He saw his pick-ax leaning by the queen's side and wanted to get it.

As he drew it softly away he saw one of the queen's feet sticking up from under the covers. There was the clumsy granite shoe on it! If he took it off, he could stamp on her foot if she came at them!

Quietly as a mouse, he drew off the shoe! Then what did he see! The queen *had* six hideous toes, just as he had sung in his rhyme! He looked for the other shoe and began to draw it off too! But at that, the queen gave a growl and sat up in bed. The king awoke too!

“Run, Irene, run!” cried Curdie.

Irene saw the fearful creatures looking at her. Wise princess as she was, she dashed the torch down on the floor and put it out. Then she caught Curdie's hand and kept her finger on the thread. Curdie clung to his pick-ax and the queen's shoe. They both ran as hard as they could! They had a good start. It would take some time for the goblins to find and light torches to follow them. The thread finally brought them through a very narrow opening and they stopped to take breath.

“ We are safe now, I think,” said Curdie.

“ Yes,” answered Irene, “ I know we are. My fairy grandmother is taking care of us.”

“ That is all nonsense you are talking!” cried Curdie. “ I don’t know what you mean!”

“ Then why do you call it nonsense!” said Irene, ready to cry.

“ I beg your pardon, dear princess,” said Curdie. “ I won’t say so any more. Any way, the king and queen won’t be likely to catch us now!”

“ The king and queen!” cried Irene. “ What do you mean?”

“ That was the goblin king and queen,” answered Curdie. “ Are they not hideous?”

He went on to tell her all he knew about the goblins and how he met the king and queen and crown prince, Harelip. Then Irene told him about her fairy grandmother and the spider-web thread. Curdie did not believe a word of it, but he was not going to say so.

All this time, they were walking down a passage way. They now came to a hole in the floor of it. Curdie ought to have known this hole. He had seen the goblins make it. The goblins’ animals went down it to come out on Irene’s lawn.



THEY HAD COME OUT BY THE CHANNEL OF THE LITTLE STREAM

“ My thread goes down into this hole, Curdie,” said Irene.

Curdie was not listening to her, but to a sound some one was making further on. It was the goblins digging on in the same passage way they were in. Where in the world were they going?

Meantime, Irene had gone down into the hole.

“ Oh, Curdie! Curdie!” she cried. “ Come on! Come on down. There is a little stream of water down here!”

Curdie hurried down after her. Sure enough, they were standing in water. Curdie was terribly afraid now, lest, as they went on, they should fall into some deep gulf and be drowned. But there was no other way. So on they went, feeling every step. Then, all of a sudden, there was a glimmer of light ahead of them! Then they came right out into the sunlight!

“ Why! We’re in my own, own garden!” cried Irene.

Sure enough, they had come out by the little stream that ran out from under the rock where the princess and her king-papa had sat and talked.

“ Come, Curdie! Let’s run to the house!” cried the princess. She kept her finger on the thread,

though. They went through the front door but saw no one. The thread led straight to the foot of the old stair-case.

“ Oh, Curdie! ” said Irene. “ My fairy grandmother wants me. Come up with me. Do, dear Curdie! Then you will know I was telling you the truth about my thread.”

So she ran up the steps and Curdie followed her without a word.

CURDIE EXPLAINS THE DESIGN OF THE GOBLINS.

Up the stairs they went, and up, till they reached the last steep little stair. Then they went up that, one behind the other. Irene knocked at the right hand door and stood listening for the hum of the spinning wheel. She heard nothing there, and turning around knocked at the left hand door.

“Come in,” answered the sweet voice of her fairy grandmother. She went in, followed by Curdie.

“You darling!” cried the lady.

She was sitting by the fire of roses among which were now some white ones. She herself was dressed in white and looked more lovely than ever. She took the little princess in her arms.

“I’ve brought Curdie, grandmother,” said Irene. “He wouldn’t believe when I told him about the thread and you. So I have brought him to see. But you’ll believe me now, won’t you, Curdie?” she added, turning around to him.

But Curdie was standing in the middle of the room staring about him strangely.

“ Make a bow to my grandmother, Curdie,” said Irene.

“ I don’t see any grandmother!” said Curdie sulkily.

“ Don’t see my grandmother!” cried Irene. “ Don’t you see the lovely fire of roses? Nor the blue bed? Nor the rose-colored coverlet? Nor the beautiful light like the moon hanging from the ceiling? ”

“ No! ” answered Curdie, more sulkily still. “ I see a big, bare garret—a tub—a heap of musty straw—a withered apple—and a ray of sunshine coming through a crack in the roof and shining on your head! I see nothing else! ”

“ Don’t you hear my grandmother talking to me! ” cried the princess in great surprise.

“ No, I don’t! ” said Curdie. “ I hear a lot of pigeons cooing. That is all! It is just like the precious thread you told about. There is nothing to it! You are making game of me. I shall go straight home! ”

Away he stumped, down the stairs, across the yard, and on up the mountain. Irene looked at her fairy grandmother with tears in her eyes. She forgot that her grandmother had told her that no one

would see any more than Curdie saw unless he believed in it! Lootie had not believed her story. But she never thought that Curdie would doubt her! To comfort her, her grandmother slipped her opal ring back on her finger.

“ Oh, thank you, dear fairy grandmother! ” said the princess. “ I am glad to have it again. But my ball of spider web thread is gone. It is all twisted up in the mountain.”

Her grandmother did not answer her, but got up and went to the fire of roses. She put her hand into it without fear, and when she held it up again, there was the little silvery ball safe and sound. She carried it over to the cabinet and dropped it back into the little box.

“ There it is, my dear, all ready for you when you need it again,” she said. “ And now, my child, you must have a bath.”

She took off Irene’s blue cloak and slippers and got the little princess ready for her bath. Then she lifted her up and laid her in the big silver bath tub. Irene gave a little gasp as she sank into it. It seemed to have no bottom—only the stars shining miles away. But it was delicious to be there and to hear her grandmother singing somewhere back in the room.

After a while, she was lifted out and dried. Then her fairy grandmother laid her in the blue bed under the rose-colored coverlet.

Meanwhile Curdie had stumped home, still angry with Irene for making game of him, as he thought. His mother was glad to see him safe, for he had been away two days and nights.

He was not happy, as his mother could see. At last, he told her all about it. To his surprise she did not seem to think Irene had behaved badly. She seemed to think there was something in the story about the thread and the fairy grandmother in her lovely room with the beautiful light shining above her head.

“How can you believe such stuff!” cried Curdie. “I tell you there was only a bare garret!”

“How do you suppose she found her way into the mountain to you?” asked his mother. “She had never been in the mine in her life! And she brought you out by a way you knew nothing about.”

“It does seem strange!” said Curdie. And now he began to feel that it was not so hard to believe it after all.

“I will tell you something more,” said his mother, “something that happened to me before you

were born. I had taken your father's supper to him at the mine, for he was going to stay all night. It was dark as I started back. By that turn in the road by the big rock—you know it?—half a dozen goblins got around me and began to torment me.”

“ Oh, if I had only been there! ” cried Curdie and his father together.

His mother smiled and went on. “ I was getting terribly frightened when suddenly, a great white light shone upon me. I looked up. A broad ray like a shining path came down from a globe of silvery light—a light that was not the moon nor anything of that sort. Down the path of light, came a bird gleaming like silver. It flapped its wings once or twice, then came sailing straight down the sloping ray. At once the goblins took to their heels. I saw them no more. Then the bird went gliding back up to the lovely globe of light and both vanished together.

“ How strange! ” cried Curdie.

“ Yes,” said his mother, “ but it was true. And Irene's story may be just as true. At all events, you ought to believe her till you know more about it.”

“ Perhaps I ought! ” said Curdie. “ I am sorry now that I was cross with her. But I'll work for her

safety just the same. And, father, I think I have got on the track of the goblins' plan at last."

"Why do you think so, my boy?" said his father.

"I think I know now in what direction they are going," said Curdie. "Just as Irene and I came to the channel of the little stream that flows out of her garden, I heard the goblins digging away, only lower down. Of course, I did not know then, myself, where we were. But when we walked out into the garden, I felt sure they were digging toward Irene's house. They are going down under it, perhaps, to come up through the cellar. I am going back tonight to find out. I shall take a light and a piece of paper and mark all the turnings, so we can be sure."

"Oh, Curdie!" cried his mother. "Then they will see you!"

"What if they do? I am not afraid—now that I have one of their precious queen's shoes. She is the only one to fear. And with one foot uncovered, she won't do me much harm."

"But what if they *are* digging toward Irene's house, Curdie?"

"Why, then I can guess what they were talking about that night I looked in on the royal family and

got caught. They were talking about the crown prince, Harelip, marrying a sun woman. That means one of us. Now, the other night, when I followed Glump to the meeting in the great hall I heard this. One of the goblins said that if his Majesty's first plan worked out all right, his Highness, the prince, would soon have a pledge to insure the good behavior of his relatives. His mother was a sun woman, you know. So the sun people are his relatives. But if the prince is going to marry a sun woman, he would not marry any one but a princess. I am sure it is Princess Irene he means to marry."

"But," said his father, "our king would dig their mountain down into the plain before he would let his little princess marry Harelip."

"Yes," said Curdie, "but they intend to dig into the cellar of Irene's house before any one knows it. They intend to catch Irene and carry her away into the mountain. Then, if the king says anything, they will tell him they will kill the little princess unless he lets her marry Harelip!"

"They would not kill her," said his father. "But they would certainly threaten to torment her if he did anything to them."

"That is true!" said his mother. "And how dreadful that would be!"

“It is too terrible to think of!” cried Curdie. “But I will keep a watch on them and see what they are up to. I will set out at once. I know a place where I can climb over the wall of the garden quite easily. Then I can go up the little stream where we came out.”

“Be sure you keep out of sight of the men whom the king left to watch!” said his mother.

“That I will!” said Curdie. “They would be sure to do something to let the goblins know they were watched. That would spoil all.”

So Curdie set off for the garden. Close beside the little gate by which the princess left the garden for the mountain, stood a great rock. By climbing over it Curdie got over the wall. He tied his string to a stone just inside the channel of the stream and took his pick-ax with him. He had not gone far when he met a horrid goblin animal coming toward him. It was too narrow for Curdie to pass him. Besides Curdie did not want to pass him.

But he was not able to use his pick-ax and had to fight the beast without it. He had a hard fight and was bitten more than once. At last, with his pocket knife, he managed to kill the creature. He dragged him out of the channel upon the lawn and then hur-

ried back before another could come and stop him.

He met no other, however, and went safely on his way. He stayed in the mine all night watching the goblins and making a plan of their digging. When he came home to breakfast, he was sure of one thing. The goblins *were* digging in the direction of the princess's house. They were working on so low a level that he was also sure they meant to pass under the walls of the house and come up in the cellar. Then they would watch their chance to catch the little princess and carry her off for a wife for their horrid Harelip.

CURDIE COMES TO GRIEF AND GETS INTO A FIGHT.

For quite a while after this, everything seemed to be quiet. The king's men kept close watch about the house of the princess. Curdie was more sure every day that he had guessed what was his Majesty's first plan. He kept a sharp eye on the goblins in the mountain. He saw that they were digging down deeper and deeper. It would be some time before they could come up again and get through into the cellar of Irene's house.

The one thing which troubled him was to remember how rudely he had said he did not believe the princess about her grandmother. He longed to see Irene again and tell her so. His mother told him she was sure the day would come when he could do so. And Curdie felt that he never could be happy till he did.

That was just the way Irene would have felt, for she was a true princess. A real prince or princess could not be happy till a wrong was made right. So you see there is some reason to think that Curdie was not just a miner's boy but a prince as well.

At length, the goblins began to change their digging. They began to go up a hard slope of rock. The next night, Curdie saw that they were still digging upward. He said to himself it was time he went back to keep watch in Irene's garden.

For several nights, he kept watch there without the king's men seeing him. But at last, they did see him. They took him for one of the goblin animals and shot at him with their cross-bows. An arrow wounded him in the leg so that when he tried to run he fell down. When the men seized him, they were very much surprised to find a boy in their hands.

"What are you about here!" they said to him angrily. "You have no business here in the king's grounds! If you do not give a good account of yourself, you will catch what is fit for a thief!"

At first Curdie did not want to tell them who he was. But there was no help for it.

"Well, I will tell you all about it," he said. But he could go no farther. He turned faint from the pain in his leg and fell on the grass. Then they saw the blood running from his leg and found he was wounded. So they carried him into the house to do something for his wound and all the servants came in to see him. Among them was Lootie. As soon as

she saw him, she said, " I declare! It is the same young rascal of a miner who was rude to the princess and me on the mountain! He wanted to kiss the princess! I took good care he didn't! Now he is prowling around here—the young scamp! "

It was very plain from this speech that Lootie was not a princess. If she had been, she would have remembered what Curdie had done for her and been ashamed to make such a speech.

When he heard this, the leader of the king's men had Curdie laid upon a cot and carried off to one of the empty rooms. There he was locked up. It was not till evening that he came to himself and knew where he was. One of the king's men was with him. When Curdie saw he could not get out of the room, he told this man all about the goblins and begged him to watch most carefully. But the man simply thought he was out of his head with fever and did not believe a word of it. And now Curdie knew what it was not to be believed. When he thought of Irene he was sorrier than ever.

That same night strange noises were heard all about the house.

" What can that noise be? " said one of the house maids after listening a moment or two.

“ I’ve heard it the last two nights,” said the cook. “ I would think it was rats if my Tom ever let a rat come around! ”

“ The noises are too loud for rats,” said Lootie. “ I have heard them all day. The princess has asked me more than once about them. They sound to me like the noises the miners make in the mountains.”

“ Very likely, it *is* the miners,” said the cook. “ Perhaps they are digging close to us.”

At that moment, there came a sound like thunder. They all rushed into the hall and there found the king’s men just as excited. After listening a minute, the leader of the king’s men said it was just a slight earthquake that would do no harm. As they heard nothing more, they made up their minds that that was it. It was just the rumble of a slight earthquake, and after a little all went to bed.

However, it really was what Curdie had told one of the king’s men—the goblins. They had loosened a huge stone which lay close under the house. It had crashed down the slope they had made in digging up to it. They kept very quiet afterward till they were sure that all had gone to bed. Then they went on working softly till, presently, they came up into the king’s wine cellar.

As soon as they had broken a big hole through, back they scampered to the goblin king to tell him what they had done. At once, the goblins, king, queen, crown prince Harelip and all, rushed down the passage way to the house of the princess in hot haste. They were eager to catch her and carry her away into the mountain.

The queen went stumping along in one granite shoe and one skin shoe. She had wanted to have another stone shoe made but the king would not allow it. He threatened to tell of her horrid toes if she did. He did not care to have her kick him again, and let her wear her one stone shoe now only because they were going to war, as it were.

Up through the hole in the cellar floor, the goblins swarmed. Then they crowded up the cellar stairs to force the door into the house.

Meantime, Curdie was dreaming and dreaming and dreaming. He dreamed about meeting Lottie and Irene on the mountain—about being captured and thrown into the hole by the goblin queen—about Irene coming to find him—and lastly about a great roar of sound that shook the house!

Then he heard, as he thought, a hand on the lock of his door. It opened and he saw a beautiful lady

come in. She had flowing white hair and in her hand was a silver box. She came up to his bedside and stroked his head and face with cool soft hands. She took the cloth off his leg and rubbed his wound with something that smelled like roses and lilies. Then she waved her hand over him three times and he sank down into the softest sleep.

How long he slept, he did not know. All at once, he was wide awake! There was a great uproar in the house! There were yells of men and cries of women and hideous bellowing! Up jumped Curdie, threw on his clothes, hauled on his shoes in a second, snatched a small sword from the wall and ran like the wind!

When he reached the ground floor, he found the whole place swarming. All the goblins of the mountain seemed to be there. Curdie rushed in among them shouting, "One, two, hit and hew! Three, four, blast and bore!"

At every word, he stamped with his nailed shoe on some one's foot. At the same time he banged around him with his sword. Away went the goblins into closets—upstairs—into chimneys—upon the rafters—and down into the cellar!

Curdie rushed into the great hall where the king's

men were. They were all down on the floor. The queen had got them all down by kicking their shins with her granite shoe. They had banged at her head with their swords, but, of course, that did no good. Now a heap of goblins sat on each man. "Bang on their feet!" cried Curdie. "Their feet are soft! Bang on their feet!"

The men took the hint at once and most of them were soon up. And now Curdie and the queen rushed at each other. She aimed a great kick at him with her stone shoe and tried to catch him around the waist. He dodged that foot and jumped heavily on the other in its skin shoe. She let go of him with an awful howl, sat down on the floor, and took her foot in her hands. "Where is the princess!" cried Curdie. No one knew, and off they all rushed in search of her. Nowhere was she to be found. Curdie searched room after room but saw no trace of her. Still rushing around from one passage to another, he heard a great hub-bub down below and went down to see what it was.

It led him into the wine cellar. Harelip and his party had caught all the servants and were forcing them along to the hole in the floor, to drive them into the mountain. The butler had thought to invite them

to taste the wine. No sooner had they tasted it than they dropped everything else to crowd around him and get some more.

Curdie looked everywhere for Irene. Not seeing her, he rushed upon Harelip and his party, stamping and cutting with great fury. But now, down came the rest of the goblins, the king and queen at their head. The queen at once made for Curdie. A regular stamping fight was gotten up between them. They swung around and around each other, each watching his chance to stamp on the other's foot.

Meantime, Harelip had made up his mind to have some sun woman for his wife, any way. He caught up Lootie and sped with her toward the hole. She gave a great shriek which Curdie heard. At that moment, he got a chance at the queen's foot, and stamped on it with all his might.

She fell back and he dashed after Lootie. He gave a great stamp on Harelip's foot just as he reached the hole. The crown prince yelled and dropped into the hole, while Curdie dragged Lootie away.

But now, here came the queen again with a lot of goblins around her. Her eyes were flashing with a green light, her mouth was open, and her teeth grinning like a tiger's. Things began to look dangerous

for Curdie again. At that moment he was glad to see the king's men coming down with their leader. They all rushed upon the queen's band, stamping furiously right and left.

This finished the fight, and the goblins went pouring down the hole, the queen in front. No one thought of trying to take them prisoners till afterward. They were only too glad to see them go.

"Take me to the princess's room!" cried Curdie to Lootie. "Quick! We *must* find her!"

Lootie did not stop a moment now to say what she thought of the miner boy. She obeyed him at once as if he were a real prince.

But in Irene's room, all was confusion. The bed clothes were tossed about on the floor, and the princess's clothes scattered all over the room. It was only too plain that the goblins had been there! They had gone straight there when they first came into the house.

By this time, the darling princess might be carried away into the heart of the mountain and shut up in some dark cave! But he would find her—find her and rescue her! He turned away and dashed down the cellar steps. He would plunge into the hole and follow the goblins through any danger that came.

HOW THE PRINCESS WAS RESTORED TO HER FATHER.

At that moment, something touched his hand. It was the slightest touch in the world and when he looked he could see nothing. His fingers, however, seemed to run along a tight thread. It flashed upon him that this must be the princess's thread. Without a word, he started to follow it. He knew it was of no use to say anything to any one else about it. No one would believe him just as he had not believed Irene.

The thread took him out of the house at once and up the mountain side. Had it led the princess into the mountain again? Then she would be sure to meet the goblins as they rushed back in rage from their defeat! But perhaps he could overtake her first. So on he rushed.

When, however, he reached the place where the path turned off toward the mine, the thread did not follow it. It went straight on up. He bounded up after it. It led him straight to his own home. He threw open the door and burst in! And there! there, in his mother's arms, lay the princess fast asleep.

“Hush! Curdie,” said his mother. “Do not waken her.”

With a heart full of delight, Curdie slipped in and sat down at a corner of the hearth. He did not wish to waken her. All he wished was to look at her and know that she was safe. But it was not long before Irene opened her eyes and saw him there.

“O, Curdie, you’ve come,” she said, quietly. “I thought you would come.”

Curdie rose and stood before her with downcast eyes.

“Irene,” he said, “I am sorry I did not believe you. I do now. It was your grandmother’s thread which brought me here from your home where I was hunting for you. The goblins were all over your home. We thought they had got you. They wanted to carry you off into the mountain. They were going to make you marry their ugly crown prince, Harelip.”

“Oh, how dreadful!” cried the princess, shuddering. “But how did you know? How did you come to be in my house?”

So Curdie told her everything—how he had watched for her sake—how he had been wounded and shut up by the king’s men—and how the beautiful old lady had come to him.



"HUSH, CURDIE!" SAID HIS MOTHER. "DO NOT WAKEN HER"

“ That was my fairy grandmother! ” cried Irene. “ She made your leg well just as she made my hand well.”

Curdie had forgotten all about his wound till then. In the excitement of the fight he had forgotten that he had had a fever from it and been sick. Now he turned down his stocking to look and sure enough his leg was quite well.

“ But,” said Curdie’s mother, “ we are forgetting how frightened Irene’s people will be about her. You must take her back home at once, Curdie.”

“ Yes, mother. But I must have some breakfast first. Then we will go.”

Then he started suddenly. “ Oh, mother, mother! ” he cried out. “ *You* must take the princess home yourself. I must waken father at once! I forgot! I forgot! ”

And he ran out of the room, leaving his mother and the princess staring after him. He had just remembered what his goblin Majesty’s other plan was in case the first one did not turn out well—to flood the mine and drown the miners. He awoke his father and in a moment both of them darted out of the cottage.

Curdie ran here and there calling the miners to

hurry to the mine. His father went straight to the mine. When Curdie first told him about it, his father had made up his mind that the thing to do was to build up the passage through which Curdie had broken the hole into Glump's house. So he had carried there a lot of stones and cement. Thus everything was at hand, and as soon as Curdie and the other miners came, they set to work.

Before many hours, they had built up a thick wall. There was then no danger of water coming through that hole. They had heard goblin pick-axes busy all the time. At last they were sure they heard the sound of water running where they had never heard it before.

But when they came out of the mountain, they saw what had been the cause of that. A terrible storm was raging over the mountain. From the way the brooks were rushing along, it was plain that it had been going on all day.

Curdie at once thought of his mother and the princess. If they had set out, the storm had overtaken them. If not, still they might not be safe. The cottage in which he lived might have been swept away by the great streams of water that were pouring down the mountain side. And the wind was blowing hard

enough to uproot trees. What if one had fallen on the house!

Struggling along through wind and water, he at length came in sight of his home. The cottage was still there. A big rock just back of it had parted the water that came down upon it. But a large stream was flowing on either side of it. It was hard work to wade through the nearest one without being thrown down by the current. But he managed it at last and made his way up to the door. Just then, he heard the princess call out gaily, "There's Curdie! Curdie! Curdie!"

When he got in, he found her sitting tucked up on the bed. His mother was trying to light the fire which the rain had put out again and again. The floor was just a patch of mud. But the three people in the cottage were now just as happy as could be.

"I never *had* such fun!" cried the princess.

She could not go home that night, it was clear. So Curdie's mother put her in Curdie's bed which was in a tiny garret-room. As she lay in bed, she could look through a little window in the roof.

Through it she caught sight of her grandmother's lamp shining far away beneath. She gazed at the silvery globe till she fell fast asleep.

Next day, Curdie and his mother set out to take the princess home. They had to carry her across the streams and walk slowly over the rough path. As they turned the last corner, what did they see but a troop of the king's men riding slowly through the gate!

“ Oh, Curdie! ” cried Irene. “ My king-papa has come! ”

At once, Curdie caught her up, crying out, “ Come on, mother dear! The king may break his heart before he knows she is safe! ”

He ran as hard as he could. As they reached the gate, there sat the king with all the people of the house about him, weeping and hanging their heads. The king looked like a dead man, he was so white. They were all so full of their grief they did not notice Curdie coming in through the gate.

“ Papa! Papa! ” cried the princess. “ Here I am! ”

The king gave a great cry and caught her to his heart. Then such a shout arose from all the people that the horses danced and capered. The rocks of the mountain sent back the noise.

The princess told them all about it—more about Curdie than about herself. She told how Curdie had

found her and Lootie on the mountain the first time—how he had saved them from the goblins—how she had promised him a kiss which Lootie would not let her give him.

“ But a princess *must* do what she promises, must she not, king-papa? ” she asked.

“ Indeed she must, my child—except it be wrong,” said the king. “ There, give Curdie a kiss! ”

The princess leaned down and threw her arms around Curdie’s neck and gave him the kiss she had promised long before.

After the king had spoken to Curdie’s mother they all went into the house. They dressed themselves in their best clothes and such a feast was held in the great hall as made every one happy.

The feasting went on after little Irene had gone away to bed. The king’s harper was playing and singing when, suddenly, he stopped. Every one looked at the door. It opened and in came Irene, with one hand stretched out before her. At once, the king and Curdie knew she was following her thread. She went at once to the king and said:

“ King-papa, do you hear that noise? ”

There was a great silence. “ I do hear a noise—

like thunder," said the king. "It comes nearer and nearer. What can it be?"

Curdie had laid his ear to the ground at Irene's first word. He now rose and said very fast, "Please, your Majesty, I think I know what it is! But I have no time to tell you now. Will you please order every one to leave the house as fast as he can and run up the mountain side?"

At once, the king caught up Irene, and said, "Every one follow me!" Curdie and his father, who had come after them to the feast, took his mother between them. Everybody rushed out of the house. Out of the gate and up the mountain, they all ran. Hardly were they out of the way, when out of the front door, and out of the gate, there burst a huge stream of muddy water that went roaring down the hillside.

"You see, your Majesty," said Curdie, "the goblins were going to flood the mine, but we built up the hole where the water would come through. They did not know it, however, and let loose the water. When it could not get through the hole from Glump's house, it turned back and ran down the tunnel they made up into your cellar. Then it burst out through your house. I thought of that the moment I heard the noise."

“ We must set out at once for my palace,” said the king. “ But how to get my horses! ” Curdie and some of the men ran back to the stables. They managed to lead out the frightened horses, Curdie on the king’s white horse leading the way.

“ Look! Look! Curdie! ” cried Irene, as he came up.

Curdie did look and saw, high in air, somewhere about the top of the house, a great globe of light, shining like the purest silver. The same moment, there shot from it a white bird which flew down on out-spread wings, made a circle around the king and Curdie and the princess, and glided up again. Then light and pigeon vanished together.

The king mounted his horse and took the little princess in his arms. Then he turned to Curdie’s father and mother.

“ I wish to take your son with me,” he said. “ He shall become one of my bodyguard.”

But Curdie spoke up at once.

“ Please, your Majesty, I cannot go. I cannot leave my father and mother. They have no one but me.”

“ That’s right, Curdie,” said the princess. “ I would not if I were you! ”

“Spoken like a true prince!” cried the king. “I will not ask it, my boy. But I will not forget you. No, I will not forget who saved my little Irene’s life. And we shall see you again, never fear!”

“Yes, we shall see you again!” cried the princess. “Good-bye, Curdie!”

The king asked the miners to care for his servants till they could return to the house, and soon rode away into the darkness.

It was a number of days before any one could go back to the house to live. They had to dig another passage for the water before it stopped pouring through the house. Most of the goblins were drowned. Their caves were all filled with water. A few of them got out to the outside of the mountain and saved their lives. Thus having to live in the sun, they began to grow more like human beings again. They lost their ugly looks and ugly ways, and later, they turned into the Brownies—who, you know, are a very nice little people.

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